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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/700,775

11/04/2003

Nanda Christine Almond

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07/13/2006

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EXAMINER

REICHLE, KARIN M

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3761

DATE MAILED: 07/13/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/700,775

Applicant(s)

ALMOND, NANDA CHRISTINE

Examiner

Karin M. Reichle

Art Unit

3761

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 April 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 18 March 2004 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 2/2/06.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Information Disclosure Statement

1. The references crossed through on the IDS were either already of record or the reference number and Inventor name were inconsistent and the reference of that number was directed to irrelevant subject matter.

Response to Amendment

2. The abstract as filed 4-28-06 has not been entered because it is not in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121, i.e. compare the last line of such to the originally filed abstract. Also, note that in the amendment to page 2, lines 3, line 8 thereof “,”, first, should also have been underlined.

Specification

Drawings

3. The drawings were received on 4-28-06. These drawings are not accepted by the Examiner. For example, in Figure 3 wrapper 60 is not shown as now set forth in the amendments to page 13, line 31-page 15, line 8. Figure 3 as now proposed has not been completely described in the Detailed Description of the Drawings section. Figure 7 does not clearly show the shape as claimed in claim 6. Figure 8 does not show at least the applicator of claims 13-14 and the applicator is not shown as now set forth in the amendments to page 13, lines 3-28. The Figures still do not show the structure as claimed in claim 17. See following paragraphs.

4. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the densities as claimed in claims 1, and 7-12, the shape as claimed in claim 6, the applicator as claimed in claims 13-15 and the wrapper and texturing as claimed in claims 16-17 must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

5. The drawings are objected to because where are Figures 7 and 8 as set forth now at page 2, lines 3-14, page 3, line 19, and page 13, line 14, -page 14, line 10? Where is the structure of page 14, line 10-page 15, line 22 shown in Figure 3, e.g. wrapper material wrapped around the tampon and sealed onto itself? Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR

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1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as “amended.” If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either “Replacement Sheet” or “New Sheet” pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Description

6. The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because on line 2, “;” should be deleted. On line 4, “;” (both) should be deleted. Lines 5-6 “Also,...insertion end region.” is redundant. Correction is required. See MPEP § 608.01(b). Note again paragraph 2 supra.

7. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: The Summary of the Invention section, i.e. a description of the claimed invention, and the invention of the claims are still not commensurate, see MPEP 608.01(d). The description on page 3, line 24-page 4, line 5, i.e. a tampon is insertable in body cavities also, is inconsistent with that on page 4, lines 5-7, and 29-30, and page 5, lines 27-29, i.e. describes structure of the tampon with regard to only the

vaginal canal. The description of Figure 3 in the Detailed Description of the Drawings section is not of the same scope as Figure 3 as now described at page 13, line 31-page 15, line 18, i.e. also includes a wrapper. See discussion of the drawings supra.

Appropriate correction is required.

8. The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. See 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP § 608.01(o). Correction of the following is required: antecedent basis for claim 8 should be set forth. Page 2, lines 27-29 do not provide such contrary to Applicant's remarks.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

9. Claims 12-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 13-16 are still unclear since the preamble describes the invention as a tampon but the claim body defines the invention as a tampon and applicator or a tampon and a wrapper, e.g. is the invention only a tampon or more than a tampon, e.g. in claim 13, line 2, should "tampon" be --absorbent material--?

Claim Language Interpretation

10. The claim language is interpreted in light of the definitions on page 3, line 24-page 7, line 10, page 13, lines 14-18 and page 14, lines 3-4, as best understood, see discussion in paragraphs supra.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

11. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

12. Claims 1-5, 7, 9 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hennig '009.

Claims 1, 7 and 9: See Hennig at Figures, title, col. 2, lines 29-35 and 54-56, col. 3, lines 14-32, and 41-43, col. 4, lines 21-31 and 38-41 and the Claim Language Interpretation section *supra*, the tampon, 10, 10', 10'', has a longitudinal centerline, a cross-sectional area orthogonal thereto, is a mass of absorbent material formed into a self sustaining shape having a surface which is substantially serpentine and has an insertion end region adjacent 12, a central region 16 and a withdrawal end region 14 adjacent 34 which has a fiber density greater than the center region fiber density and about equal to the insertion end fiber density. The maximum perimeter region of the insertion end region has an average fiber density, see 14 adjacent 12, greater than the center region minimum perimeter region average fiber density.

Claims 2-5: see the cited portions and the Figures and note that it is not claimed how the regions flare or taper, e.g. toward the center region or away therefrom, i.e. a region which flares toward the center region also tapers away from such center region.

Claim 17: see col. 4, lines 27-31 for example.

13. Claims 1-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Randall et al '536 or Kollwitz et al '805.

The applied reference has a common assignee and inventor with the instant application. Based upon the earlier effective U.S. filing date of the reference, it constitutes prior art under 35

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U.S.C. 102(e). This rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) might be overcome either by a showing under 37 CFR 1.132 that any invention disclosed but not claimed in the reference was derived from the inventor of this application and is thus not the invention “by another,” or by an appropriate showing under 37 CFR 1.131.

With respect to Randall et al ‘536, claims 1, and 6-17: see Figures, col. 2, line 18-col. 4, line 43, col. 6, lines 65-66, col. 7, lines 10-57, col. 8, lines 42-48 and col. 9, lines 22-24 and claims 1-3, 5-8, 15, and 17-19, i.e. the insertion end is 24, the withdrawal end is 30 and the center region is 32. With regard to claims 2-5, see the cited portions and the Figures and note again that it is not claimed how the regions flare or taper, e.g. toward the center region or away therefrom, i.e. a region which flares toward the center region also tapers away from such center region.

With respect to Kollwitz et al ‘805, claims 1 and 6-17: see Figures, col. 2, line 18-col. 4, line 32, col. 6, lines 14-15, col. 6, line 63-col. 7, line 6, col. 7, lines 56-62 and col. 9, lines 35-37 and claims 1-2, 4-7, 14, and 16-19, i.e. the insertion end is 24, the withdrawal end is 30 and the center region is 32. With regard to claims 2-5, see the cited portions and the Figures and note again that it is not claimed how the regions flare or taper, e.g. toward the center region or away therefrom, i.e. a region which flares toward the center region also tapers away from such center region.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

14. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

15. Claims 6, 8 and 10-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hennig '009.

With regard to claim 6, Applicant claims the withdrawal end being asymmetric about the longitudinal centerline of the tampon but does not disclose any significance to such shape. Also, see, e.g., col. 4, lines 27-31 of Hennig. Therefore, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to employ a shape of the withdrawal end which is asymmetric about the longitudinal centerline, e.g. asymmetric texturing, if not already, since such a modification would have involved a mere change in the form or shape of a component. A change in form or shape is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art. In re Dailey, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1976).

With regard to claims 8 and 10-11, Applicant claims the range of the fiber density of the withdrawal end or insertion end region maximum perimeter region average fiber density as compared to that of the center region or center region minimum perimeter region, respectively. Applicant does not disclose the significance of such ranges and Hennig discloses that the densities of the end regions are greater than those of the center region, i.e. the same general conditions of the claim. Where the general conditions of the claim are disclosed by the prior art, it is not inventive to discover the optimum or workable ranges by routine experimentation, see In re Aller, 105 USPQ 233.

16. Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hennig '009 in view of Child et al '952.

In addition to the density relationship taught by Hennig Applicant claims the regions being a cotton and rayon blend which Hennig does not teach. Hennig does teach the desire to be

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formed of a cellulose based material of the type well known for catamenial tampons. Also see Child at col. 3, lines 53-65, i.e. well known catamenial tampon cellulose based materials include cotton and rayon blends. Therefore, to make the cellulose based material of Hennig a cotton rayon blend as taught by Child would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art in view of the recognition that such is a well known catamenial tampon cellulose based material and the desire of Hennig to employ such a material.

17. Claims 13-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hennig in view of Bletzinger '422.

Applicant claims an applicator in which the tampon is housed which applicator is at least partially translucent or comprised of flexible material which conforms to the outer surface of the tampon which allows the user to observe the profile of the outer surface or a wrapper which tightly conforming. Hennig does not teach such applicator or wrapper but does teach a cellulose based tampon intended for insertion in a body opening. Furthermore see Bletzinger '422 at the Figures, col. 1, lines 15-21, 56-62 and 69-71, col. 2, lines 10-26 and 55-58, col. 5, lines 21-28 and 58-61, i.e. combining a cellulose based tampon for insertion with a body opening with an applicator or wrapper as claimed for ease of insertion and to maintain the condition of the tampon until use. Therefore, to employ an applicator or wrapper as claimed in combination with the Hennig cellulose based tampon intended for insertion in a body opening would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art in view of the teachings of Bletzinger due to the recognition that such would enhance insertion and maintenance of the tampon condition until use and the desirability of such in any tampon. It is noted with respect to claim 16 that the wrapper of

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Bletzinger does not exceed the perimeter of the outer surface similar to outer surface 50 of the instant application more than 50%, i.e. is "tightly conforming".

Double Patenting

18. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

19. Claims 1-17 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-8 and 15-20 or claims 1-7 and 14-20 of U.S. Patent No. 6,824,536 or 6,932,805 in view of Hennig (claims 1-17) and Child (claim 12). Since this application was filed after the patents, the *In re Vogel* one way test applies, i.e. is the invention of the application obvious in view of the invention of the claims of the patent? The answer is yes. The claims of the application are both broader and narrower than the claims of the respective patent. Specifically the application claims do not require 1) the perimeters and volume as claimed in claim 1, claims 4-8 and the function claimed in claim 20 of the '536 patent or the perimeters as claimed in claims 1, 3, 5-7 and 15 and the function as claimed in claim 20 of the '805 patent but do require 2) the fiber density relationships as claimed in claims 1 and 7-12 and the cotton rayon blend as claimed in claim 12 of the application. With regard to 1), in

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essence once the applicant has received a patent for a species or more specific embodiment he/she is not entitled to a patent for the generic or broader invention. This is because the more specific anticipates the broader. Thus the respective patent claims anticipate the application claims. See *In re Goodman*, supra. With regard to 2), see the cited portions of Hennig supra. To employ the claimed density pattern, i.e. combination of fiber density changes, as taught by Hennig would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art in view of the recognition that such shape reliably seats in a body opening in which it is inserted to absorb fluid therefrom and the desirability of such by the claimed tampon, see the definition of "tampon" in col. 2, lines 18-20 of '536 and '805, i.e. desire for insertion into a body cavity for absorption of fluid therefrom. With regard to claims 8 and 10-11, see the discussion in paragraph 13 supra which rationale, i.e. not inventive to discover optimum ranges, also applies here. With regard to claim 12, the claimed regions are claimed as being of a rayon and cotton blend which is not claimed by the claims of '536 or '805. However, again see the definition of tampon in the respective patent, i.e. "any absorbent structure" for insertion into body cavities including the vaginal canal. See the portions of Hennig and Child supra, i.e. absorbent structures for insertion into body cavities include cellulose based materials known for catamenial tampons which known materials include cotton rayon blends. Therefore, to make the absorbent structure of the respective patent "tampon" a cotton rayon blend as taught by Hennig and Child would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art in view of the recognition that such is a well known absorbent material for the structure of a "tampon" and the desire of the respective patent to employ such a structure.

20. Claims 1-6 and 8-17 are provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-16 of copending

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Application No. 10/770,776. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because since this application was filed on the same day as the other application, the *In re Vogel* one way test applies, i.e. is the invention of claims of this application obvious in view of the invention of the claims of the other application? The answer is yes. The claims of the application are both broader and narrower than the claims of the other application. Specifically, 1) claims 1-6, 8 and 13-17 of the instant application do not require the density of the insertion end region relative to the center but 2) do require the withdrawal end region density relative to the center in combination with the features of claims 2-6 and 8-17.

With regard to 1), in essence once the applicant has received a patent for a species or more specific embodiment he/she is not entitled to a patent for the generic or broader invention. This is because the more specific anticipates the broader. Thus the other application claims, if patented, would anticipate the application claims. See *In re Goodman*, supra. With regard to 2), see claim 7 of the other application. To also employ the fiber density relationship between the withdrawal end and the center region in combination with the other features claimed in claims 2-6 and 8-17 would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art in view of the recognition that such would provide a denser withdrawal end enhancing the stability thereof, e.g. better prevention of breakup while being used during insertion and withdrawal and the desire in any tampon to be inserted and withdrawn without breakup.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

21. A rejection based on double patenting of the "same invention" type finds its support in the language of 35 U.S.C. 101 which states that "whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process ... may obtain a patent therefor ..." (Emphasis added). Thus, the term "same invention," in this context, means an invention drawn to identical subject matter. See *Miller v.*

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Eagle Mfg. Co., 151 U.S. 186 (1894); *In re Ockert*, 245 F.2d 467, 114 USPQ 330 (CCPA 1957); and *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970).

22. Claim 7 is provisionally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 as claiming the same invention as that of claim 7 of copending Application No. 10/700,776. This is a provisional double patenting rejection since the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

A statutory type (35 U.S.C. 101) double patenting rejection can be overcome by canceling or amending the conflicting claims so they are no longer coextensive in scope. The filing of a terminal disclaimer cannot overcome a double patenting rejection based upon 35 U.S.C. 101.

Common Ownership

23. The statement on page 28 of the 4-28-06 response has been noted. It is stated for the record that the invention referred to therein is deemed to be the invention of the instant application.

Response to Arguments

24. With regard to Applicant's remarks on pages 12-21 with respect to matters of form, such remarks have been considered but are either deemed moot in that the issues they address have not been reraised or are deemed not persuasive for the reasons set forth supra. It is noted with regard to the language "tampon", while Applicant is permitted to use his or her own terminology such should be used consistently, i.e. its unclear from Applicant's use what the metes and bounds of the terminology "tampon" is, i.e. only vaginal use or other body cavity use also? Applicant's remarks with respect to the prior art rejections and the obviousness type double patenting rejections have been considered but are deemed not persuasive in that such are narrower than the claim language and/or the prior art teachings. For example, the claims require

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a fiber density relationship between certain regions, and Hennig teaches the regions 14, i.e. also referred to as thickened regions, not only being of low compressibility and/or high expansion but also of greater fiber density than regions 16, note again the portions of the reference cited in the rejection supra, e.g. Figure 1 and col. 4, lines 40-41. For a second example, while Randall and Kollwitz teach an embodiment where the fiber density in the center is greater than that of the certain region, this is not the only embodiment taught thereby, see, for example, Figure 1 compared to Figure 7, col. 6, lines 65 and 66 and col. 7, lines 10-29 of Randall. With respect to the obviousness and statutory double patenting rejections, Applicant's remarks on page 28, third and fifth full paragraphs have been noted. As note above the statement of common ownership is noted and is deemed proper. The issue directed thereto in the Office Action has not been reraised.

Conclusion

25. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event,

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however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any new grounds of rejection were necessitated by the amendments to claims 13-16.

26. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Karin M. Reichle whose telephone number is (571) 272-4936.

The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tanya Zalukaeva can be reached on (571) 272-1115. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Karin M. Reichle
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3761

KMR
July 9, 2006